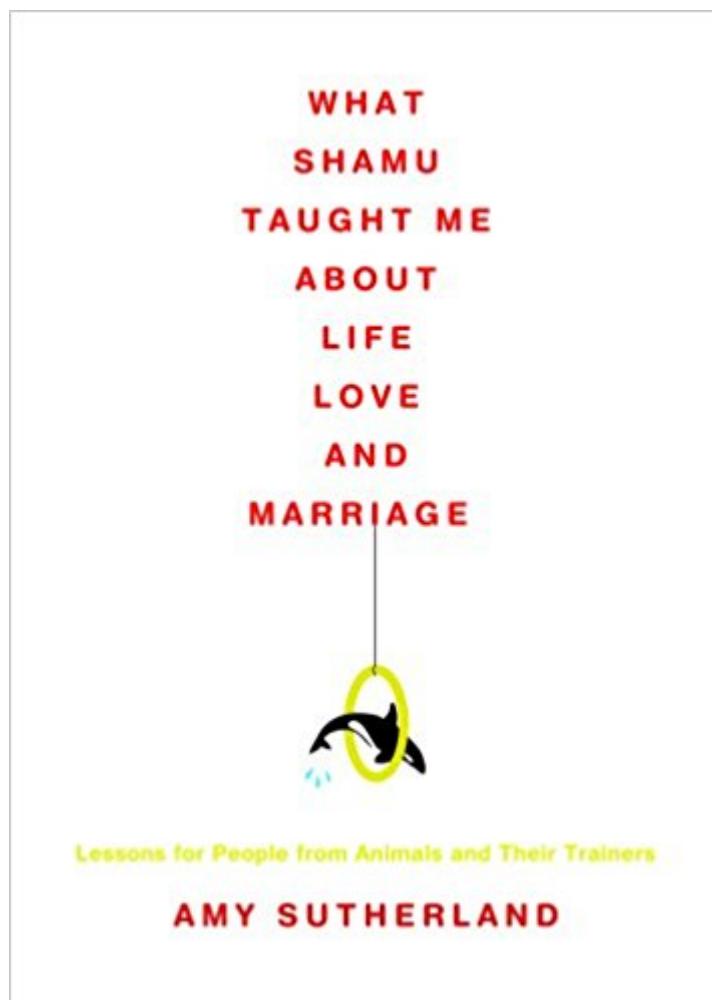


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# What Shamu Taught Me About Life, Love, And Marriage: Lessons For People From Animals And Their Trainers



## Synopsis

We can change--and train--people for the better, and every human interaction is training. This book is based on Amy Sutherland's number-one most viewed and often e-mailed article of the New York Times online in 2006, about applying the principles of exotic animal training to her marriage. The book will extend those lessons to other everyday relationship challenges, from your boyfriend's chronic lateness to your boss's micromanaging to the driver who likes to tailgate. Funny, charming and informative, this book puts a new spin on solving relationship problems.

## Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: Blackstone Audio, Inc.; Unabridged edition (February 28, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1433212021

ISBN-13: 978-1433212024

Product Dimensions: 6.3 x 0.7 x 5.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 133 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #786,584 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #62 in Books > Books on CD > Parenting & Families > Interpersonal Relations #335 in Books > Books on CD > Health, Mind & Body > General #740 in Books > Books on CD > Health, Mind & Body > Self Help

## Customer Reviews

Ã¢ "Playful, passionate, and practical.Ã¢ "RedbookÃ¢ "A compelling argument for using techniques from animal trainers to help change bad habits and improve relationships.Ã¢ "Atlanta Journal-ConstitutionÃ¢ "SutherlandÃ¢ "s a smart, engaging writer, and her stories about the hows and whys of exotic animal training are fun and fascinating.Ã¢ "Boston Sunday GlobeÃ¢ "Part self-help guide, part animal psychology textbook and part memoir . . . Sutherland has a breezy style.Ã¢ "Ã¢ "New York Times Book ReviewÃ¢ "In the little, private zoo known as marriage, it helps to remind yourself that you and your partner are just two bipedal primates trying to get along in intimate co-habitation.Ã¢ "Globe and MailÃ¢ "Wise and pragmatic advice . . . The thing I love most about this book is that every other paragraph, SutherlandÃ¢ "s terrific wordsmithing, compelling logic, and anecdotes about exotic animals make me feel like sheÃ¢ "s tossed me a biscuit.Ã¢ "Ã¢ "Martha Beck, author of *Steering by Starlight* and columnist for O: The

Oprah Magazine Ã¢â€”“Hilarious and persuasive.Ã¢â€”“Good HousekeepingÃ¢â€”“Invaluable . . . It succeeds nicely as an animal-training guide, and amusingly as a relationship book.Ã¢â€”“•Buffalo News --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Amy Sutherland is also the author of Kicked, Bitten, and Scratched and Cookoff. Her articles have appeared in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and Boston Globe. She has a master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University and divides her time between Boston and Portland, Maine.

I really enjoyed reading this book, especially while taking a psychology class about behavior and learning. I found it very useful since it has an abundance of everyday examples that makes it easier to understand and to implement this on your own life, if one should wish. She offers many examples of how to train animals but also of how to train any human in your surrounding. She writes with light and humor and her explanations and examples are fairly short and concise, which I like.

SheÃƒÂ¢Ã¢â€”“s generous with examples from her own life, talks about how the book came about and a lot about her studies of animal training. For someone whoÃƒÂ¢Ã¢â€”“s interested in animals I think this is an even greater read. For me whoÃƒÂ¢Ã¢â€”“s more interested in the human aspect I found it to be a little bit too much about animals, even though still on point. I would definitely recommend it either way, itÃƒÂ¢Ã¢â€”“s a quick read and can help better anybodyÃƒÂ¢Ã¢â€”“s life. My favourite parts are how she points out that it is your own behavior youÃƒÂ¢Ã¢â€”“re changing, and that itÃƒÂ¢Ã¢â€”“s all about rewards, never punishment. I strongly recommend men to read this as well so that maybe they wouldnÃƒÂ¢Ã¢â€”“t feel so threatened about her seemingly controversial topic.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. I initially read it for an extra credit assignment for my learning psychology class. Reading this book changed the way I view many daily interactions with peers, coworkers and family members. Some of the main points Amy Sutherland addresses are the benefits to using positive reinforcement as opposed to punishment. She explains that traditional animal trainers may use rewards but always use punishment. An animal is motivated to avoid something bad, so punishment can be useful in terminating a behavior. However, progressive trainers wonÃƒÂ¢Ã¢â€”“t use punishment but rather use training as communication. They wonÃƒÂ¢Ã¢â€”“t make animals do anything, but will entice them. An example she used was getting a dog to sit. If he showed the behavior they wanted, he would get a treat. If he

didn't then nothing would happen; no punishment. You also have to be very careful of your actions, just because you don't consider a response a punishment doesn't mean the animal (or human) won't think of it as a punishment. She used the example of turning your back to a dog. Even if you don't consider it a punishment, if it makes the dog cringe, then it's a punishment. She explains that punishment in general give unreliable results. She uses the example of speeding tickets. Even though there is a consequence for speeding, people will still drive fast, just reduce their speed in the presence of a cop. Positive reinforcement, she explains is a more reliable way to get the behavior you want. It is more effective because it is more motivating. For example, taxes. Many file taxes to avoid a fine (punishment), but the possibility of getting money back (reinforcement) is much more motivating. One of the most interesting techniques she talked about was Least Reinforcing Scenario or LRS. LRS is any response, positive or negative that could fuel a behavior. If an animal has a behavior that does not evoke a response or reaction, the behavior will generally fade away. She tried this technique on her husband while he was searching for missing keys or wallet. Instead of responding to this behavior or his she did not like, she just ignored it and did not respond. She stated that his behavior eventually went away when he didn't receive a response from her. However some bad behaviors can't be ignored. When dealing with some animals, ignoring certain behaviors could get you killed. Overall a very good read and will definitely affect the way you interact with others!

I stumbled upon this book because I needed extra credit for a psychology class and wish I would have discovered it earlier. The techniques used by Amy perfectly correlate to the lessons we covered in Psychology. What housewife wouldn't love this book? Being able to train your husband to do what you prefer just makes sense! (Of course this read isn't just for housewives it's great for everybody). What Shamu taught me about life, love and marriage is an easy to read, fun & witty book. Amy brilliantly tells a story using examples of how she was effective in training her husband, due to her acquired skills and knowledge as an animal trainer at Sea World. Using a slew of positive reinforcements for her husband and friends, Amy kept in mind things Scott and those around her enjoy. The following quote from the book really resonates with me and provides a great example of her differential reinforcement of other behavior (or as we call it, *EoDRO* in Psych class). "I thought of a list for Scott: smiles, hugs, kisses, compliments, head rubs, and presents (especially stereo and bike gear). (pg 96). Using training methods

learned from her trade such as positive reinforcement, negative punishment, rewarding liked behaviors and ignoring unwanted behaviors she paints great stories that we all can learn from and apply to our everyday lives with those we interact with the most. I'm not quite a housewife yet but I'm definitely going to use these techniques learned from Amy to start training my boyfriend, so that someday he will propose to me. Bwahahaha! In all seriousness this was a great read, very informative on the psychology of our interactions with others while giving the reader useful and profound tips to make a change in their own world. I would recommend to absolutely everybody.

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